

Suffering for Jesus (Acts 3-8 NIV)

SERMON NOTES AND DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

I. Introduction

- a. The 3 ways in which we suffer

II. How we suffer

- a. By Spirit-produced courage (Acts 4:1-13)
- b. By being together (Acts 4:23-31)
- c. By rejoicing (Acts 5:17-42)

III. Rejoicing

- a. Why we face it
- b. The fruit produced

IV. The fruit produced

- a. Intimacy with Jesus (Acts 7:54-60)
- b. Expanding God's kingdom (Acts 8:1-4)
 - i. Festo Kivengere, Anglican bishop of Uganda

V. Conclusion

- a. God provides incredible power for those called to face impossible pain

Discussion Questions

Sharing Life Together: Using Your Imagination

1. The diner boasts the world's best pie. What type of pie are you hoping they are offering?
2. What's your most typical response after a long, difficult day?

For Reflection:

1. Ben said that there are three ways in which we suffer: 1) as the result of our fallen world i.e. disease and disaster; 2) through injustice i.e. murder, slavery, racism, etc.; 3) our faith in Jesus. Do you agree or disagree with this statement? Why or why not?
2. How do you respond to Jesus' statement, "If they persecuted me, they will persecute you"?
3. How do you need to trust the Holy Spirit for courage in moments where sharing Jesus will potentially result in suffering?
 - a. What are some situations where sharing Jesus could result in suffering?
4. In what ways do you need to expand your view of God?
 - a. What miraculous things do you need to ask God for right now?
5. The Spirit distributes different gifts, yet we're all called to be ambassadors for Jesus. In what ways do you think God wants you to use your Spirit-given gifts to share Jesus?
6. Why do you think it's important that rejoicing in the face of suffering for Jesus be a choice we make, not an automatic response?
 - a. Where have you seen difficulty (suffering) grow your trust and obedience in God?
 - b. How have you seen difficulty (suffering) connect your heart with God's?
 - c. In your life or in others, have you seen God use difficulty (suffering) to expand His kingdom?
 - d. In what ways does difficulty (suffering) draw you closer to Jesus?
7. The three reasons for which we suffer requires us to respond with lamenting and with looking to God. The final reason (faith in Jesus) tells us that we should rejoice. Our rejoicing informs the first two reasons we suffer. Based on that, where are you? Do you need to lament? Do you need to look to God? Do you need to choose to rejoice?